

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent there now be a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. COLEMAN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— S. 1691

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I want to speak today about S. 1691, the Wartime Treatment Study Act. During World War II, the United States fought a courageous battle against the spread of Nazism and fascism. Nazi Germany was engaged in the horrific persecution and genocide of Jews. By the end of the war, 6 million Jews had perished at the hands of Nazi Germany.

The Allied victory in the Second World War was an American triumph, a triumph for freedom, justice, and human rights. The courage displayed by so many Americans, of all ethnic origins, should be a source of great pride for all Americans. But we should not let that justifiable pride in our Nation's triumph blind us to the treatment of some Americans by their own government.

Sadly, as so many brave Americans fought against enemies in Europe and the Pacific, the U.S. Government was in some cases curtailing the freedom of some of its own people here, at home. While, it is, of course, the right of every Nation to protect itself during wartime, the U.S. Government can and should respect the basic freedoms that so many Americans have given their lives to defend. Of course, war tests our principles and our values. And as our Nation's recent experience has shown, it is during times of war and conflict, when our fears are high and our principles are tested most, that we must be even more vigilant to guard against violations of the Constitution.

Many Americans are aware of the fact that, during World War II, under the authority of Executive Order 9066, our Government forced more than 100,000 ethnic Japanese from their homes into internment camps. Japanese Americans were forced to leave their homes, their livelihoods, and their communities. They were held behind barbed wire and military guard by their own government.

Through the work of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians created by Congress in 1980, this unfortunate episode in our history

finally received the official acknowledgement and condemnation it deserved. Under the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, people of Japanese ancestry who were subjected to relocation or internment later received an apology and reparations on behalf of the people of the United States.

While I commend Congress and our Nation for finally recognizing and apologizing for the mistreatment of Japanese Americans during World War II, our work in this area is not done. We should also acknowledge the mistreatment experienced by many German Americans, Italian Americans, and European Latin Americans, as well as Jewish refugees.

Most Americans are probably unaware that during World War II, the U.S. Government designated more than 600,000 Italian-born and 300,000 German-born U.S. resident aliens and their families as "enemy aliens."

Approximately 11,000 ethnic Germans, 3,200 ethnic Italians, and scores of Bulgarians, Hungarians, Romanians or other European Americans living in America were taken from their homes and placed in internment camps. Some even remained interned for up to 3 years after the war ended. Unknown numbers of German Americans, Italian Americans, and other Europeans Americans had their property confiscated or their travel restricted, or lived under curfews.

S. 1691 would not grant reparations to victims. It would simply create a commission to review the facts and circumstances of the U.S. Government's treatment of German Americans, Italian Americans and other European Americans during World War II.

A second commission created by this bill would review the treatment by the U.S. Government of Jewish refugees who were fleeing Nazi persecution and genocide. German and Austrian Jews applied for visas, but the United States severely limited their entry due to strict immigration policies, policies that many believe were motivated by fear that our enemies would send spies under the guise of refugees and by the unfortunate anti-foreigner and anti-Semitic attitudes that were, sadly, all too common at that time.

It is time for the country to review the facts and determine how our restrictive immigration policies failed to provide adequate safe harbor to Jewish refugees fleeing the persecution of Nazi Germany. The United States turned away thousands of refugees, delivering many to their deaths at the hands of the Nazi regime.

As I mentioned earlier, there has been a measure of justice for Japanese Americans who were denied their liberty and property. It is now time for the U.S. Government to complete an accounting of this period in our Nation's history.

Let me repeat that the bill I have introduced, along with Senator GRASSLEY, does not call for reparations. All it does is ensure that the public has a

full accounting of what happened. I believe that is the right and, yes, the patriotic thing to do. It is patriotic to ensure that the Government owns up to its mistakes. We should be very proud of our victory over Nazism, as I certainly am. But we should not let that pride cause us to overlook what happened to some Americans and refugees during World War II. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the Wartime Treatment Study Act.

The Judiciary Committee has reported this bill favorably. It has been cleared by my Democratic colleagues. Unfortunately, someone on the other side of the aisle has placed a hold on the bill. This anonymous person or persons are unwilling to identify themselves or to explain the reasons for the hold. I think some Republican colleagues have been trying to figure out for me what the problems is. Frankly, I find it hard to imagine why someone would object to a fairly straightforward, non-controversial bill such as this. So, Mr. President, I will try again.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 309, S. 1691, a bill to establish commission, to review the facts and circumstances surrounding injustices suffered by European Americans, European Latin Americans, and Jewish Refugees during World War II, that the bill be read the third time, passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; that the title amendment be agreed, with the above occurring without intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. GRAHAM of South Carolina. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I have been informed that our leadership is working on a method for this proposal to move forward. I admire what the Senator is doing on a personal basis. With that understanding, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I know the Senator from South Carolina was a supporter of this legislation in committee, and he is doing what he must do in representing that side of the aisle.

I am disappointed that there is an objection to moving this bill. The Judiciary Committee has now reported this bill favorably to the floor on two occasions—last Congress and again this Congress. I would like to know what their concerns are. So far, we have never heard a substantive objection. There is a secret hold being used here. That is unfortunate. This bill is long overdue. It is not controversial. In fact, I specifically was promised by the chairman of the Judiciary Committee late in the 106th Congress, when I was hoping the issue of German Americans would be linked to a bill going through Congress on Italian Americans. I was assured this was not controversial and